Two day meeting of NDC

†1201. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of decisions taken in two days meeting of the National Development Council held in Delhi;

(b) the details of decisions taken with consensus;

(c) the details of issues on which consensus could not be formed; and

(d) the details of efforts being made by Government to evolve consensus on them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (c) The National Development Council met under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 27th & 28th June, 2005 to consider the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan and with consensus expressed broad agreement with the goals and policies suggested in the Mid-Term Appraisal which could act as a blue print for further action on development matters in the Tenth Plan and as the starting point for initiating work on the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The Planning Commission was directed to examine a number of valuable suggestions made by Chief Ministers during the course of discussions which require a review of some of the policies, programmes and approaches. In addition, NDC also took the following decisions with consensus:

1. The NDC took note of the concerns expressed by the Chief Ministers about issues relating to State finances, particularly the effects of the recommendations of the 12th Finance Commission, the level of permissible market borrowings and interest costs on borrowings as also issues relating to mineral royalties and externally aided projects. It was decided to set up a Committee separately under the Finance Minister to examine relevant issues relating to the debt burden of States and debt relief with reference to their debt outstandings against the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF).
2. Recognizing the fact that agriculture and irrigation have been a common theme in the interventions of the Chief Ministers, and that rejuvenating the agricultural credit system, providing some measure of relief to farmers, improving the quality of our extension work, attending to the specific needs and problems of dry lands

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and wastelands and enhancing investments in irrigation have emerged as common concerns, the NDC agreed to form a Sub-Committee for drawing up implementable action plans in agriculture and related issues. The NDC Sub-Committee is expected to submit its report within the next six months for inclusion in the Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

3. On the Employment Guarantee Act, the suggestions that payment of wages should be mostly in cash since there were problems in movement of food grains to backward areas and that being the self-targeting programme, the Employment Guarantee should cover non-BPL families were noted by the NDC, and it was directed to consider them for inclusion in the final draft of the National Employment Guarantee Bill.

4. To look into the need for providing adequate flexibility in the design of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the National Rural Health Mission and Bharat Nirman etc., to take account of state level realities and priorities, as well as the feasibility of their transfer to States/UTs or amalgamation into four or five broad heads with the freedom to develop locally relevant programmes, the NDC directed the Planning Commission to consider setting up an Expert Group to develop concrete proposals for restructuring the CSS, in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments.

5. Recognizing that improvement in physical infrastructure has also emerged as a common priority and increased private participation has now become a necessity to mobilize the resources needed to achieve its expansion and upgradation, the NDC observed that successful promotion of private participation in infrastructure requires a well-designed framework of policies in which investors have the assurance that standards of services will be maintained and concessions will be transparently awarded and directed the Central Government to work towards evolving such a framework, which could be adopted by the States.

6. The Planning Commission was directed to begin work on the Approach to the Eleventh Five Year Plan with a view to submit it for National Development Council's approval by the end of December, 2005.

(d) Does not arise.